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Lower Snake River Study Brigadier General Carl Strock
Department of the Army
Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers
201 North Third Avenue
Walla Walla, Washington 99362-1876

Dear General Strock:

On behalf of McCain Foods USA, the world's largest potato and appetizer processor, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you my thoughts regarding the salmon recovery effort. I am encouraged to share my opinion due to the fact the dam breaching effort has a direct impact to Washington State agriculture, in particular, Washington State potato production.

First and foremost, the main objective should be to save the salmon, especially the species that are decreasing in population. The objective has created debate over what is right or what is wrong for the salmon. The objective is not to find rationale for taking out the dams, but rather to find the right way to save the salmon, and to save a healthy economy within the Washington State agricultural and potato processing industries.

If we continue to focus on extreme alternatives such as dam breaching and drawdowns, we will all end up losing in the end – including the salmon. In reality, we should be considering broader holistic solutions that take a serious look at the consequences and really get results.

People of the Northwest should oppose removing dams for the following reasons:

- Ten years ago, the best scientific information said that only 10 to 30 percent of salmon smolts survived the trip past the dams. Today, survival is as high as it was in the 1960s and 1970s – before the dams on the lower Snake River were even built!
- Of the 34 West Coast runs of salmon and steelhead that are listed or proposed for listing under the ESA, only 4 pass the dams on the lower Snake River.
- Breaching dams will dry up thousands of acres of productive farmland and will eliminate thousands of agricultural and food processing jobs in Washington State.
- Hydropower is clean and renewable. Replacing hydropower with other sources of power will adversely impact air quality. Using more rail and truck transportation to move our products (instead of barging) adds even more pollution.



- In addition, during peak summer & winter months, the West Coast power grid is at full capacity. If the power generated by the Snake River Dams is taken away, brownouts could occur.

Obviously, taking out dams is not the answer. The purpose of this letter is to communicate concerns as well as offer up support for a solution that will benefit the salmon, and save a healthy economy within the Washington State agricultural and potato processing industries. Those opposed to dam breaching must work to find other alternatives or options to help in the recovery of salmon rather than participating in the act of complaining. Although the "All-H" Paper addresses recovery efforts, it must address the four components of habitat, hydropower, hatchery and harvest equally and encompass a balanced approach. If the region is truly interested in recovering our salmon populations, we must have a comprehensive plan to address this.

1 | The salmon population along with the Washington State agricultural and potato processing industries are all at stake if the right alternatives are not studied and considered carefully. In 1999, over 95,200,000 cwt of potatoes were produced from over 170,000 acres in Washington state. This production pumped over \$450,000,000 into the Washington agricultural economy. Currently, Washington state is ranked as the second largest potato production state in the United States. With the extreme measure of dam breaching, the 170,000+ acres may not be irrigated thus threatening agriculture potato production in the state as we know it today. In addition, the above figures mentioned do not take revenues from french fry production or trucking into consideration. Apple, grape, other cash crop production would cease as well. As one can see, dam breaching causes a direct impact to the demise of agricultural and food processing industries in the state.

I urge you and your colleagues to base decisions on good, sound science. The remarkable rivers have encouraged a prosperous economy in Washington. The rivers have given the state clean, renewable power, irrigation for growing crops, navigation for moving products to market, recreational opportunities, and the means to prevent flooding. In closing, together we need to seriously consider the devastating impact of dam breaching which will destroy the Washington economy, the salmon population and the lives of thousands of people in the Pacific Northwest.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Laurie Jecha-Beard
Vice-President, Agriculture
McCain Foods, USA